

nitrosoanatabine, and N'-nitrosoanabasine which at least 75% by weight lower than the content of said at least one tobacco-specific nitrosamine in cured brown tobacco made from the same tobacco crop but which was cured in the absence of steps designed to reduce the content of said at least one nitrosamine.

80. (new) The process of claim 79, wherein the at least one tobacco-specific nitrosamine is 4-(N-nitrosomethylamino)-1-(3-pyridyl)-1-butanone.

81. (new) The process of claim 79, wherein said content of at least one tobacco-specific nitrosamine is at least about 90% by weight lower than the content of said at least one tobacco-specific nitrosamine in said cured brown tobacco.

82. (new) The process of claim 81, wherein said content of at least one tobacco-specific nitrosamine is at least about 95% by weight lower than the content of said at least one tobacco-specific nitrosamine in said cured brown tobacco.

REMARKS

Claims 53-82 are pending. By the foregoing amendment, claim 53 has been amended to point out more fully the invention and claims 69-82 have been added. Independent claims 69 and 76 set forth a process of substantially preventing the formation of at least one nitrosamine in a tobacco plant by curing tobacco with a flow of air sufficient to avoid an anaerobic condition around the vicinity of the plant. Support for new claims 69-82 is found in the specification, *inter alia*, at page 14, lines 5-17; page 20, lines 1-21; and original claim 4. No new matter has been added. Entry of the amendment is respectfully requested.

As discussed in the specification at page 14, lines 5-17, conventional curing techniques in which combustion exhaust gases pass through the tobacco (so-called "direct-fired" heating) fail to avoid an anaerobic condition. Such conditions (*i.e.*, inadequate oxygen flow) facilitate the formation of nitrosamines by microbial action. Independent claims 69 and 76 distinguish direct-fired heating (as well as other conventional curing techniques) by setting forth that the flow of air is sufficient to avoid an anaerobic condition around the vicinity of the plant, so as to substantially prevent the

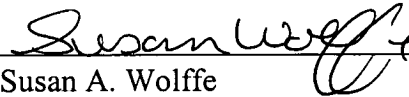
formation of at least one nitrosamine. None of the prior art of record describes or even remotely suggests the process of claims 69-82.

Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the subject application are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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